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ABSTRACT

Cuyahoga Community College collects student ethnic information as part of its regular Fall Quarter registration process by distributing a computer card to in-person registrants. The student is asked to indicate his or her ethnic group from among those groups listed on the card (American Indian, Black, Caucasian, Cuban-American, Puerto Rican, Mexican-American, Oriental-American, Other Spanish-Surnamed American, or Other). Each fall, a number of students report themselves in the "Other" category. In completing the card, the student is asked to specify the other ethnic group in which membership is claimed. Occasionally a student will make two responses to the ethnic question, indicating membership in one of the listed ethnic groups and also in the "Other" category. As a by-product of the fall 1974 registration process, 337 student ethnic cards with single and double responses to the "Other" category were forwarded to the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation; of these, 294 (83.7 percent) were single responses and 43 (12.8 percent) were double responses. Analyses reveal that only 13.6 percent of those students responding to the "Other" category truly belong in that category. From 1972 to 1974, the number of single responses has increased, while the number of double responses has sharply declined. Tables of pertinent data are included. (Author/DC)

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STUDENT ETHNIC REPORTING
THE "OTHER" CATEGORY
FALL 1974

June 16, 1975

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Research and Evaluation

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STUDENT ETHNIC REPORTING
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Introduction

Cuyahoga Community College collects student ethnic information as part of its regular Fall Quarter registration process by distributing a computer card to in-person registrants. The student is asked to indicate his or her ethnic group from among those groups listed on the card. Each term, a number of students report themselves in the "Other" category. The "Other" category is intended for use by a student who wishes to respond but who does not fall within one of the listed ethnic categories.* The results are reported in Institutional Research Report 1 (IR1), a computer-generated summary of student characteristics.

In completing a student ethnic card, the student is requested to specify the other ethnic group in which membership is claimed. Occasionally a student will make two responses to the ethnic question indicating membership in one of the listed ethnic groups and in the "Other" category. Inasmuch as only the first response is tallied in the IR1 report, the responses to the "Other" category are not tallied for the IR1 when two responses have been made to the ethnic question.

As a by-product of the Fall 1974 registration process, 337 student ethnic cards with single and double responses to the "Other" category were forwarded to the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation. Cards with single responses accounted for 294, or 83.7 percent, of all the returned student ethnic cards. Cards with double responses numbered 43 or 12.8 percent of the total returned cards. Table 1 indicates the distribution of these responses by campus.

Ideally, the number of cards with a single response to the ethnic question ought to equal the number of students reported as "Other" in the IR1 report. In comparing the single responses (N=294) with the Fall 1974 IR1 "Other" category (N-308) a difference of 14 responses was noted. The source of this discrepancy cannot be determined although loss or damage in processing or machine error are likely sources of the error.

Results

An analysis by campus of both single and double responses reveals that only a small percentage of those students who responded to the "Other" category truly belong in that category. None of the double responses fell into the true "Other" category. Tables 2, 3 and 4 show the breakdown and tabulations of responses by campus.

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*American Indian, Black, Caucasian, Cuban-American, Mexican-American, Oriental-American, Puerto Rican, and Other Spanish-Surnamed-American

Table 5 summarizes Tables 2, 3 and 4. It shows that only 13.6 percent of the students who report themselves as "Other" can reasonably be considered as belonging in that category. In practical terms, this means, on the basis of the 294 single responses examined, that 254 persons were improperly categorized as "Other" for purposes of IRI reporting. If these 254 students had properly identified themselves they would have been allocated among other reporting categories, e.g. "American Indian."

Table 6 shows the relative changes in frequency and percentage of the types of responses by campus from Fall 1972 to Fall 1974. The number of single responses has increased from 1972 to 1974 while the number of double responses has sharply declined.

Conclusions

The limited number of double responses to the student ethnic question do not appear to represent a problem in student ethnic reporting. Since the number and percentage of double responses are absolutely declining, the procedure of tallying only the first response in the IRI report is not a significant source of error in that report.

Most important for reporting purposes is the finding that 254, or 86.4 percent, of the single responses to the "Other" question could properly be assigned to different ethnic categories. These 254 responses represent 1.1 percent of the total Fall 1974 district enrollment of 22,416 and 82.5 percent of the Fall 1974 district "Other" total of 308 reported in the Fall 1974 IRI report.

TABLE 1

CAMPUS DISTRIBUTION OF SINGLE AND DOUBLE RESPONSES
TO THE STUDENT ETHNIC QUESTION - FALL 1974

Campus	Single Responses		Double Responses		Total Both Types	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Metropolitan	130	94.2	8	5.8	138	100.0
Western	115	79.3	30	20.7	145	100.0
Eastern	49	90.7	5	9.3	54	100.0
All Campuses	294	83.7	43	12.8	337	100.0

TABLE 2

TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO "OTHER" ON STUDENT ETHNIC CARD
FALL 1974 - METROPOLITAN CAMPUS

Responses to "Other" Question	Single Response		Double Response①				Total Both Responses	
			Caucasian		Black			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Caucasian	50	38.5	5	62.5	-	-	55	39.9
True "Other":								
Middle Eastern②	11	8.5	-	-	-	-	11	8.0
Latin American	6	4.6	-	-	-	-	6	4.3
Moorish American	4	3.1	-	-	-	-	4	2.9
Persian	2	1.5	-	-	-	-	2	1.4
West Indian	2	1.5	-	-	-	-	2	1.4
Philippino	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Burmese	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Thai	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Indian (India)	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Subtotal	29	22.3	-	-	-	-	29	21.0
EEO Minority:③								
Black	8	6.2	-	-	-	-	8	5.8
Spanish	2	1.5	-	-	-	-	2	1.4
Oriental	3	2.3	-	-	-	-	3	2.2
Subtotal	13	10.0	-	-	-	-	13	9.4
Indeterminate Responses④	27	20.8	-	-	2	25.0	29	21.0
Blank	11	8.5	-	-	1	12.5	12	8.7
Totals⑤	130	100.0	5	62.5	3	37.5	138	100.0

①Includes those students who marked "Other" and an additional response.
②E.g. "Arab," "Lebanon," "Israel", etc.
③EEO minority groups printed on ethnic card.
④Responses that cannot be placed in ethnic categories.
⑤Column percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 3

TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO "OTHER" ON STUDENT ETHNIC CARD
FALL 1974 - WESTERN CAMPUS

Responses to "Other" Question	Single Response		Double Response①				Total Both Responses	
			Caucasian		Black			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Caucasian	79	68.7	2	73.3	-	-	101	69.7
True "Other":								
Middle Eastern	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Latin American	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
West Indian	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Pakistani	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Indian (India)	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Subtotal	5	4.3	-	-	-	-	5	3.4
EEO Minority:②								
Oriental	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Subtotal	1	0.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.7
Indeterminate Responses③	24	20.9	3	10.0	-	-	27	18.6
Blank	6	5.2	5	16.7	-	-	11	7.6
Totals④	115	100.0	30	100.0	-	-	145	100.0

①Includes those students who marked "Other" and an additional response.
②EEO minority group printed on ethnic card.
③Responses that cannot be placed in ethnic categories.
④Column percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 4

TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO "OTHER" ON STUDENT ETHNIC CARD
FALL 1974 - EASTERN CAMPUS

Response to "Other" Question	Single Response		Double Response①						Total Both Responses	
			Caucasian		Black		Rather Not Respond			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Caucasian	27	55.1	3	60.0	-	-	-	-	30	55.6
True "Other":										
Middle Eastern②	4	8.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	7.4
Latin American	1	2.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.9
Nigerian	1	2.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.9
Subtotal	6	13.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	11.1
EEO Minority:③										
Black	7	14.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	13.0
Spanish	1	2.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.9
Indian	1	2.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.9
Subtotal	9	18.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	16.7
Indeterminate Responses④	2	4.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3.7
Blank	5	10.2	-	-	1	20.0	1	20.0	7	13.0
Totals⑤	49	100.0	3	60.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	54	100.0

①Includes those students who marked "Other" and an additional response.
②E.g. "Arab," "Israel," etc.
③EEO minority groups printed on ethnic card.
④Responses that can not be placed in ethnic categories.
⑤Column percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 5

SUMMARY OF SINGLE RESPONSES TO "OTHER" QUESTION ON STUDENT ETHNIC CARD BY CAMPUS - FALL 1974

Campus	Response Category									
	Caucasian		EEO Minority		Indeterminate and Blank		True "Other"		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Metro-politan	50	38.5	13	10.0	38	29.2	29	22.3	130	100.0
Western	79	68.7	1	0.9	30	26.1	5	4.3	115	100.0
Eastern	27	55.1	9	18.4	7	14.3	6	13.3	49	100.0
All Campuses	156	53.1	23	7.8	75	25.5	40	13.6	294	100.0

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF FALL 1972 AND FALL 1974

Campus	Year	Responses					
		Single		Double		Both	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Metro-politan	1972	198	63.7	113	36.3	311	100.0
	1974	130	94.2	8	5.8	138	100.0
Western	1972	92	47.7	101	52.3	193	100.0
	1974	115	79.3	30	20.7	145	100.0
Eastern	1972	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1974	49	90.7	5	9.3	54	100.0
All Campuses	1972*	290	57.5	214	42.5	504	100.0
	1974	294	87.2	43	12.8	337	100.0

*Excludes Eastern Campus

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